

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 01010 200903Z
ACTION A-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4506

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TOKYO 1010

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: GTRD, EAGR, JA
SUBJECT: CODEL CURTIS ACTIVITIES IN TOKYO

REF: A) TOKYO 19980 B) TOKYO 249 C) STATE 5513

1. SUMMARY: MOST OF THE MEETINGS (INCLUDING THOSE AT MITI)
LISTED REFTEL A FOLLOWED A BASIC THEME IN WHICH SENATORS
CURTIS AND HANSEN URGED THE GOJ TO LIBERALIZE BEEF AND
ORAGNE IMPORTS. THEY BACKED THEIR ARGUMENTS WITH WARNINGS
ABOUT RISING PROTECTIONISM IN CONGRESS AND EXPLANATIONS OF
THE POLITICAL PRESSURES FACED BY CONGRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. MEETINGS OF SENATORS CURTIS AND HANSEN WITH GOJ OFFICIALS
AND DIET MEMBERS (LISTED REFTEL A) WERE ON BEEF. THE
SENATORS STATED THEIR BELIEF THAT IF BEEF PRICES WERE
LOWERED THERE WOULD BE SUFFICIENT DEMAND FOR EVERYONE
TO BENEFIT JAPANESE FARMERS SUPPLYING A LUXURY MARKET,
U.S. BEEF FILLING THE MARKET FOR HIGH QUALITY BEEF, AND
AUSTRALIAN BEEF MEETING LOWER GRADE DEMANDS.

3. THE JAPANESE CITED THE PROBLEMS JAPANESE FARMERS
HAVE MAKING A LIVING ON THEIR SMALL, POOR FARMS, AND
THE ALREADY HIGH COST OF GOJ PROGRAMS TO SUBSIDIZE
FARMERS, AND THEY ASKED WHY THE U.S. EMPHASIZED
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WHEN COMPLETE IMPORT LIBERALI-
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 01010 200903Z

ZATION WOULD BARELY BE NOTICED IN THE BILATERAL BOP
FIGURES. THE SENATORS ANSWERED THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE
OF CONGRESS CAME FROM AGRICULTURALLY ORIENTED STATES
AND THAT POLITICALLY U.S. FARMERS COULD NOT BE IGNORED.
ALREADY, THEY SAID, FARMERS WERE JOINING WITH STEEL-
WORKERS AND OTHERS TO APPEAL TO WASHINGTON TO SAVE THEIR
JOBS. A TRADE WAR, THEY WARNED, WOULD HURT JAPAN AND

JAPANESE FARMERS MORE THAN IMPORTS OF U.S. BEEF, ORANGES,
AND JUICES.

4. COMMENT: IN NONE OF THE FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS
WITH GOJ LEADERS DID THE SENATORS FOLLOW AS UNCOM-
PROMISING A LINE AS THAT IN THEIR JANUARY 6 PRESS
CONFERENCE (REFTEL B). ALTHOUGH THEY MENTIONED THAT
THEY DID NOT SEE HOW CONGRESS OR AMBASSADOR STRAUSS
COULD ACCEPT THE SMALL BEEF AND CITRUS IMPORT INCREASES
THEN BEING MENTIONED IN THE PRESS, THEY DID NOT DEBATE
SPECIFIC QUANTITIES. SENATORS HANSEN AND CURTIS MADE
THEIR POINTS FRANKLY, CONFIRMING THE FACT NOW WELL
KNOWN TO THE JAPANESE THAT SENTIMENT IN CONGRESS IS
STRONG ON THESE ISSUES.
MANSFIELD

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